MEMORANDUM

TO: Sheila Converse, Executive Secretary
Faculty Senate

FROM: Becky Bitter, Registrar’s Office

FOR: Academic Affairs Committee

DATE: 25 March 2015

SUBJECT: Proposal to Revise Rule 90, Grades and Grade Points

At its meeting on March 3, 2015, AAC approved the attached revision to Rule 90. The revision is requested by the Office of Student Financial Services and the Registrar’s Office.

AAC members understood the need for meeting federal reporting requirements for financial aid and Veterans benefits. Members agreed that the new grade type would meet federal reporting requirements while not burdening instructors with having to enter the last date of known attendance for every ‘F’ grade given. AAC members noted that some instructors will find it helpful to use this new grade for students who discontinue their attendance without withdrawing.

A complete rationale follows, along with the new grade type defined under Rule 90.1.

At this time, Faculty Senate review and approval is recommended, to be effective fall 2015.
To: Academic Affairs Committee  
Graduate Studies Committee  

From: Brian Dixon, Assistant Vice President, Student Financial Services  
Julia Pomerenk, University Registrar  

Date: February 23, 2015  

Subject: Establish a new internal grade:  Z  
(failure due to discontinued attendance without withdrawal)  

Please review the attached revision to Rule 90, Grades and Grade Points. To support the federal reporting needs related to federal financial aid and related to federal Veterans benefits, we propose establishing a new internal grade:  Z, effective fall 2015.  

Summary Proposal:  

1. Establish a new internal grade, effective fall 2015:  Z, to identify students who have failed due to discontinued attendance without withdrawal.  
2. The Z grade would still appear as an F on the transcript and would act as an F in grade calculations.  
3. Instructors must enter last dates of attendance for each Z grade. (The date for a last assignment submitted or for a last exam taken may substitute for a last date of attendance.)  
4. Establishing a Z grade coincides with the ability in zzusis and in Blackboard Learn to enter last dates of attendance during submission of final grades.  
5. With the establishment of a Z grade and entering last dates of attendance, WSU will be better able to comply with regulations for financial aid and for Veterans benefits.  
6. Federal regulations for financial aid require that institutions monitor unofficial withdrawals of federal aid recipients and perform R2T4 calculations (refund calculation).  
7. At the end of Fall 2014, 284 financial aid students were impacted; $1,113,465.00 had to be returned to the federal government and billed to students.  
8. At the end of Fall 2014, 67 Veterans benefits students were impacted.  
9. Our current policies and procedures make compliance difficult to administer.  
10. Non-compliance could be very costly to the institution.  
11. The U.S. Department of Education is monitoring non-compliance of this process. Best case scenario would be to deal with these students during the semester through taking attendance; however that does not seem realistic at this time.
90. **GRADES AND GRADE POINTS.**

Washington State University uses letter grades and the four (4) point maximum grading scale. The grade A is the highest possible grade, and grades below D are considered failing. Plus (+) or minus (-) symbols are used to indicate grades that fall above or below the letter grades, but grades of A+ and D- are not used. For purposes of calculating grade points and averages, the plus (+) is equal to .3 and minus (-) equals .7 (e.g., a grade B+ is equivalent to 3.3 and A- is 3.7). A student’s work is normally rated in accordance with the following definitions:

90a. **A.** Student work demonstrates consistently excellent scholastic performance; thorough comprehension; ability to correlate the material with other ideas, to communicate and to deal effectively with course concepts and new material; reliability in attendance and attention to assignments.

90b. **B.** Student work demonstrates superior scholastic performance overall, reliability in attendance, and attention to assignments; may demonstrate excellence but be less consistent than the work of an A student.

90c. **C.** Student work demonstrates satisfactory performance overall, as well as reliability in attendance, and attention to assignments.

90d. **D.** Student work demonstrates minimal, barely passing performance overall; limited knowledge of subject matter.

90e. **F.** Student work demonstrates unsatisfactory performance and comprehension or unfulfilled requirements. The grade is failing.

90f. **S.** (Satisfactory.) Grade given upon satisfactory completion of courses numbered 499, 600, 700, 702, 800, special examinations (Rule 15) and other courses duly authorized for S, F grading by the Faculty Senate. (Courses approved for S, F grading are footnoted in the Schedules of Classes.) Courses approved for S, F grading may also be graded S at midsemester indicating satisfactory progress.

   - A, S, or F grades only are used to report physical education activity grades.
   - S, M (marginally satisfactory), or F grades only are used to report grades for designated courses within the College of Veterinary Medicine.
   - H (honors), S, or F grades only are used to report grades for designated courses within the College of Pharmacy.

90g. **P.** (Passing.) A satisfactory grade for a course taken under the pass, fail Grading Option. Instructors will turn in regular letter grades for all students enrolled in courses under the pass, fail option but grades will appear on the student’s permanent record as P (Passing) or F (Failure).
90h. I. (Incomplete.) An incomplete is the term used to indicate that a grade has been deferred. It is for students who for reasons beyond their control are unable to complete their work on time. All outstanding incomplete work (including grades of I, X, and blank/no grade) must be completed and posted to the official transcript prior to the conferral of the degree. It is strongly recommended that students who are granted an Incomplete limit their total number of credits to 18 credits (including credits for the Incomplete course and any new courses) during the semester when they are finishing an Incomplete. Students who receive an I grade have up to the end of the ensuing year to complete the course, unless a shorter interval is specified by the instructor. If the incomplete is not made up during the specified time or the student repeats the course, the I is changed to an F. (See Rule 34.) Faculty are required to submit an Incomplete Grade Report (IGR) to the departmental office with every I given. The IGR must specify conditions and requirements for completing the incomplete, as well as any time limitations less than one year.

90i. W. This is the term to be used if the student has filed, in the Registrar’s Office, official notice of a withdrawal from the course prior to the end of the ninth week, or withdrew passing in accordance with Rule 68, or withdrew from the university in accordance with Rule 70.

90j. X. Denotes continuing progress toward completion of special problems, research, thesis, doctoral dissertation (i.e., 499, 600, 700, 702, 800), or flexible enrollment courses; X grades are converted to S or to a letter grade upon satisfactory completion. All outstanding incomplete work (including grades of I, X, and blank/no grade) must be completed and posted to the official transcript prior to the conferral of the degree. An X grade may also be used when no final grade is reported due to instructor’s illness or absence.

90k. U. (Unsatisfactory.) Student work demonstrates unsatisfactory performance, failed examination, or unfulfilled requirements in courses numbered 700, 702, and 800.

90l. Z. (Failure due to discontinued attendance without withdrawal.) The Z grade is an internal grade indicating that a student earned a failing grade and discontinued all participation in a course without formally withdrawing from the course. It appears and functions as an F rather than as a Z on the transcript. An instructor entering a Z grade must enter the last date of attendance for each Z grade submitted. If the last day of attendance is not available, the date of the last exam or assignment recorded must be submitted instead.